



NEWS RELEASE

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USDA Food for Progress Provides Supplemental Nutritional Assistance to 85,000 Filipino School Children

At an event today at Sagad Elementary School in Pasig City, Philippine Agriculture Secretary Proceso Alcala, Education Secretary Armin Luistro, U.S. Agricultural Attaché David Wolf, and local officials launched the USDA Food for Progress School Nutrition Program that provides nutritional assistance to an estimated 85,000 public elementary school children in the form of long shelf-life milk packs and fortified biscuits. Also present at the launching activity were Republic Flour Mills (RFM) Corporation President Jose Ma. Concepcion III, Congressman Roman Romulo, and Pasig City Mayor Robert Eusebio.

Distribution of the milk and biscuits will start on November 15 and run until January 2011. Last year, the U.S. Department of Agriculture donated 680 metric tons of milk powder to the Philippines under its Food For Progress program to help the victims of Typhoons Ondoy and Pepeng. The donated U.S. milk powder was processed and converted into long shelf-life milk packs and fortified biscuits by RFM Corporation and will be distributed to 85,000 students in 271 public schools for 60 days in four regions throughout Luzon.

"The program aims to supplement the dietary needs of the beneficiaries and improve the children's health, nutrition values, and behavior," said Secretary Alcala.

"Distribution of this milk and fortified biscuits donated by the United States not only increases students' health, but could also increase school attendance rates and participation levels by the students while in school," said Wolf.

This activity is part of the support of the United States' support for school health and nutrition programs. In addition to this, the USDA supports various agricultural development programs in the Philippines such as improving agricultural production techniques, developing agribusiness, and helping link small farmers to the market.

The USDA Food for Progress Program provides U.S. agricultural commodities to developing countries and emerging democracies committed to introducing and expanding free enterprise in the agricultural sector. Commodities are currently provided on a donation basis to foreign governments, private voluntary organizations, non-profit organizations, cooperatives, and intergovernmental organizations.

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